



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

WHAT AND HOW THEY ATE IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH

Mr. Hoover's "War Creed of the Kitchen" will doubtless go down in the cook-books of posterity as indicative of the attempt to curb the lavish use of the foodstuffs in the twentieth century. It will be interesting, too, as a study in comparison and contrast with the cuisine regulations of other days. Old cook-books offer material as romantic as do old novels, or old pictures; and possibly some day our food-conservation recipes will afford as much amused interest to the antiquarian as certain old cookery books of the sixteenth century give those of us to-day who like to browse among the shelves of half-forgotten things.

"A good cook is half a physician," says Andrew Boordes in a quaint old book of 1542 called *Introduction and Dyetary*. Be that as it may, the art of cookery, as well as that of piracy, of plays, and of statecraft, certainly flowered forth in "the spacious days of great Elizabeth."

A modern caterer would stand appalled at some demands given in the old "coke-bokes" for remarkable gastronomic mixtures which, incidentally, bear witness to the strong assimilative powers of our forefathers. Those worthies were evidently fortified by active outdoor life for strongly-seasoned dishes and four meals a day,—breakfast at seven; at ten, dinner; supper at four; and "livery" at eight.

At these repasts, counsels Boordes, "sanguine men must not eat fruits, flesh, herbs, roots, old flesh, or brains of beestes"; nor must choleric men indulge in hot spices or wine, "and should not be kept long fasting." How many good wives before and since old Andrew's time could testify to that fact! "Melancholy is cold and dry," therefore your Jaques must refrain from fried and salt meat, must drink only light wine, and eat "soft egg-yolks." Poor Jaques!

That an abundance of variety yet remained to satisfy all "humours," witness the cook-books, of which the seventeenth century was prolific. Many piquant recipes are to be found in the famous compilation of a Mrs. Glasse, for many years the court of last

appeal in the kitchen. It is called *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*—a basely deceptive title which lures the unwary into devious ways—"how to fricassee skerrets," for example; how to prepare an Oxford John; how to "French a hind saddle of mutton"; how to concoct a Hottentot pie. (Let us trust that Mrs. Glasse had not been picked up by Francis Drake on a cannibal island!) That she reflects the dramatic instinct of the age is quite evident; at least, when, in "How to Collar a Pig," she ends thus: "Stick your pig just above the breast-bane, and run your knife to the heart"! She might even have been the author of "The Twa Corbies"—who knows? I rather suspect Mrs. Glasse of an ironic humor toward the world when she prefixes these admonitions to her recipes: "First *catch* your hare"; "First *stick* your pig," etc. Perhaps she was also the derisive author of the advice to put salt on your bird's tail in order to catch him. What an intimate and conversational fashion those old cooks had of using the second person! We find here strongly visualized commands, such as "Dismember that herring! Flay that brawne! Breake that deere!" How startlingly direct and definite it is to be told to "Truss up that capon!" and to "Take a goose and mak hyr cleane!" It sounds like the First Reader. A gruesome bit, terse as Lady Macbeth, runs thus: "Bruette saoke [boiled with wine]. Take capon, *scald* him, *draw* him, smite him to gobbets, wash him, do him in a pot; then cast out the pot," etc.

A decoration of "rys" I give, with simplified spelling: "Take portion of rice, and pick him clean and seethe him well; [grim again as the Corbies], let him cool. Then take good milk of almonds and do hereto, and seethe and stir him well; [Refrain] and do hereto sugar and honey, and serve him forth." Not bad? The literary style of these "coke-bokes" is encumbered with the "and habit," however the "Bride's Pie" following was probably good; at any rate it is called "A darling Dainty" (I omit twelve "ands"): "Two calves feet y-boiled, one pound of beef suet, a pound of apples, of currants, of 'raisins of the sun'; cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, citron, and candied lemon; a glass of brandy, one of champagne. Put 'them' in a china dish with a rich puff paste y'laid; roll another 'lid,' and cut it in leaves of flowers, and put glasse ring in it." Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a bride?

In *The English Housewife*, by Gervaise Markham, which reached its eighth edition by 1675, we find the immortal pies of our Dickens days, "much augmented and purged" as the sub-title announces,—pies in "infinite variety" which custom evidently could not stale. The herring pie will illustrate as well as any the amalgam that passed down the robust gullets of our ancestors. I quote from George Ellwanger's entertaining book, *The Pleasures of the Table*:—

"A herring pye. [Much abridged.] Take white pickled herrings of one night's watering and boyl them a little, & take off the skin, & take only the backs of them, & pick the fish from the bones. Then take good store of raisins of the sun, and 'put them to the fish.' Then take a warden [a pear] & slice it small & put it likewise to the fish. Then put to it a good store of currants, sugar, cinnamon, slic't dates & so put it into the coffin [crust] with good store of sweet butter," etc. But the end is not yet; for when it is sufficiently baked, "draw it out & take a claret wine & a little verjuice, sugar, cinnamon and sweet butter yboyled together, and put them in at the vent-hole of the pie. Shake the pie a little and put it in again; then the lid being candied with sugar and the sides of the dish trimmed with sugar, so serve it up," and forthwith, as Irvin Cobb would say, "Go to it!"

Tarts, too, were legion—from tarts of primroses, and marigolds, and pickled broombuds, to tarts of beans, of green apples, and pasties of vension. Apples, by the way, were greatly esteemed, according to Harrison, but little is said of them in the cook-books. I found this recipe, however, which might be well worth trying. I have "yboyled it down," as recipes of the seventeenth century partook of Elizabethan exuberance:—

"You" first make a strong syrup of pippins and add both lemon and orange juice. The apples are swathed in thinly-pared "whole peel of oranges" properly preserved beforehand. When these orange-coated apples are placed in the "pots" where they are to be kept, "you" pour over them the syrupy pippin-water which then "jellies over and about the apples."

To flit over the pies,—the roast swan pie of "E. Smith" sounds rather appetizing, but I distrust his lamprey-pie, and should rather that my dearest foe should pass judgment on the

"botargo"—a sausage made of eggs and the blood of a sea-mullet! The salmon-pie has also a dyspeptic cast, and the virtues of carp-sauces sound anything but convincing.

Fish was important during Elizabeth's reign, and statute-laws were established to enforce its use, a measure adopted to benefit the shipping interests and to lessen the consumption of wool-bearing sheep. Besides Lent, Fridays and Saturdays were fish-days, to the chagrin of the people. Porpoise, seal, and grampus were common dishes, served with strong sauces of ginger, cinnamon, garlic and vinegar. Swordfish, and even whales, were eaten. One old writer in *The Compleat Cook* does quaintly admit, however, that whale's flesh is just the least bit the hardest of all, "even when they are very young and tenderest"; but he adds, "livers of whales smell like violets, taste most pleasantly, and give competent nourishment."

"Brawne," however, was the good old stand-by for every occasion other than "fyshe days." Boar-pies were greatly esteemed, a consignment of which, one story goes, was sent by Sir Robert Sydney, while governor of Flushing, to his wife, as a bait to induce the minister to grant him leave of absence. The many carols on the boar's head attest its popularity; and all the old serving-books say, "First set forth the brawne with mustard."

Strong seasonings were lavishly used,—mustard, galingale, cloves, garlic, leeks, etc. Some old cook with philosophical bent wrote the following quatrain:—

"If leeks you like but do their smell dislike,
Eat onions, and you shall not smell the leeke.
If you of onions would the scent expelle
Eat garlicke, that shall drown the onion smelle."

Almond-milk was a dainty seasoning; "verjuice" was made from crab-apples flavored with damask rose-leaves; vinegar, from strong old ale placed in the sun to sour, and flavored with rose-leaves. Brine is common, and is metaphorically referred to in Harvey's quaint lines (1640):—

"He that his joys would keep
Must weep,
And in the brine of tears
And fears
Must pickle them."

Few vegetables appear, but many books mention prunes, dates, and raisins. In the *Winter's Tale*, Autolycus says that warden (pear) pies require four pounds of prunes and as many "raisins of the sun"; and the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* says that "they call for dates and spices in the pastry." Cherries and strawberries were popular. Potatoes didn't come in until 1586. From the New World gradually came maize, squash, chocolate, and turkey; from the Indies, coffee, tea, and cucumbers; and cabbage was popularized from Holland. Much bread was used. "Pain main" was bread of fine flour. Oatbread, used by the poor, was a mixture of rye, lentils, and oatmeal.

Wines were fiery, heavy, sweet, and strongly flavored,—in spite of Mr. Boordes. We find rich wines of Guyenne and Gascony, and Provence, the description of which would make a modern epicure gasp. But in most common vogue were the sack and malmsey, the Malvoisie and canary, that Shakespeare has made so familiar. Mead, Queen Elizabeth's favorite drink, was made by boiling honey and water with quantities of spices, herbs, and lemons. Every thrifty country wife brewed her own beer. Harrison says his wife brewed him two hundred gallons for twenty shillings, as he was scarce a good maltster himself, and "a poor man (passing rich?) on forty pounds a year."

The punch-bowl or wassail-bowl, candle cup, and posset cup were indispensable. Punch, or pauch, from an Indian word for "five," had five ingredients: arrack, tea, sugar, lemon-juice, and water. Tea is made thus: "One dragm of tea is to go to one pint of water & the water is to stand only whiles you may say the Miserere very leisurely." "Cock Ale," from E. Smith's *Compleat Housewife* (1736), sounds dubious. Here it is: "Take ten gallons of ale and large old cock, the older the better [unlike the whale]. Parboil the cock, flea him, and stamp him in a stone mortar till his bones are y' broken. (You must gnaw him and gut him when you flea him.) Put the cock into two quarts of sack, and put to it three pounds of raisins of the sun, stoned, blades of mace, a few cloves," etc., etc.

"Water," says Boordes, is not wholesome "sole by itself for an Englishman, for it is cold, slow and slack of digestion." One can readily get the first point of view after a perusal of the cook-

books, but one ponders a bit over the comparative assimilative values of water and—say “Cock Ale.” If one must drink water, the best is out of the rain-barrel. Ale is, however, the natural drink for a normal Englishman, and beer for a Dutchman, saith Andrew Boordes.

How did they serve these indigestibles? *The Boke of Kervynge* by Wynken de Worde, goes at the subject directly: “Here beginneth the boke of Kervynge and servynge and all the feestes in the year, for the servyce of a prynce or any other offyce.”

“A feast of the 16th century,” writes Mrs. C. F. Frere, “was a serious and lengthy affair, needing, for the cooks, days of preparation,”—and, I assume, for the guests, days of recovery. Thomas Wilson (1553) describes one that began at eleven in the morning, and lasted till after four in the afternoon. The number of ceremonial dishes was stupendous. The town must have fed for a week from the “orts.” A modern appetite reels at “1,000 muttuns” and “pygges 2,000.” A much-condensed menu of the ordinary feast was as follows:—

First, of course, old reliable brawne and mustard, potage, beef, mutton, pheasant, swan, capon, pig, venison, baked custard, and leche lombarde, meat fritters with a subtilty, blanc mange and jelly. “For standard”: stork, roast venison, roast peacock, ducks and rabbits. Next, doucettes, gelly, crème of almonds, curlew, quail, snipe, baked quinces, caraway in comfits, wafers,—besides numerous “sauces,” etc., and quantities of drink.

Carving and serving was a serious art. At the coronation feast of Henry VIII, the Earl of Warwick was Pantler. Sir Thomas Erpingham brought water for the King’s hands, receiving as fee the Basin, Ewer, and Towels. The Earl of Somerset was carver. The ceremony began with “the laying of the cloth,” accompanied by genuflections. Says De Worde: “Put on a couch [pad], draw the second cloth straight, then a third. Put a towel round your neck, one side lying on your left arm, and thereon lay your Sovereign’s napkin, and on that seven loaves of eating bread and four trencher loaves. In your left hand a salt-cellar. [Profound seriousness attending the placing of the salt.] Bear in knives and spoons on your towelle.” Forks were an affectation and came into general use much later. “Wrap

your lord's bread stately. See that ewers are supplied, and a surnap." . . . After numerous other direction, "Serve the table mannerly that every man may speak your courtesy."

Paul Hentzner says that when all was laid for Queen Elizabeth's solitary dinner, "twelve kettle drums made the hall ring for half an hour, and twelve trumpets," instead of a dinner gong.

As the feast proceeded "servynge" was tasting the food as it came on, to insure it against poison. This was done with bits of bread dipped in the dish. Carving was early done by the most distinguished guest; later by a "Kerver" with elaborate art. "Your knife must be fair and your hands must be clean. Only two fingers and a thumb should be put on your knife." The commands, "Unbrace that malarde," and "dysmember that heron," assure one that a wild fowl, however leathery, must have quickly succumbed to the glittering blade and the masterful "Kerver."

The great ceremonial dish at Christmas was, of course, the Boar's head set up on the neck in the platter, with an apple or a lemon in his mouth, sprigs of rosemary in his ears and nose, and garlands wreathing the salver of gold. He was heralded by trumpets, and borne by the server to the King's table.

Another magnificent dish was "Peacock in his pride," which apparently wound up the last course. Mrs. Frere writes that the cock was stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, its head covered with a wet cloth to keep the crown feathers from roasting. The remainder of the skin with tail attached was replaced after the roasting. Ladies of most distinguished rank served "hym," attended by music. He was carved in a golden dish by the guest most renowned for valor and courtesy.

Music was a feature of all feasts. In an account of one of Elizabeth's entertainments to the Earl of Leicester in 1575, a vivid sketch is given of a young minstrel "who sang a solemn song before the Queen, his head seemly rounded tonster-wise, fair kembered with a sponge dipped in a little capons's grease to make it shine like a mallard's wing. After three low courtesies he cleared his voice with a hem, tempered a string with his wrest and after a little warbling on his harp for a prelude, came forth with a solemn song out of King Arthur's acts."

"A subtlety" was an allegorical group made of sugar, wax, tinsel, etc. One of these is described as "Maydon Marye that holy Virgine and Gabrielle gretynge hyr with an Ave." Appropriately this appeared with the opening "Brawne with Mustard."

"Animated pies" sometimes contained a dwarf; one such was served in 1630 at a dinner for Charles I. "The Almaine Leap" is apparently nothing new; but was "a heavy kind of wit" even in Elizabeth's day. As described by Mrs. Frere, a vast dish was filled with custard, and placed on the table. While the company was busily engaged, a zany suddenly entered the room and springing over the heads of the astonished guests, plunged into the custard, to the "unspeakable amusement" of those presumably at some distance from the spatterings. This robust joke was very popular. Ben Jonson refers to it in *The Devil's an Ass*; and Shakespeare writes in *All's Well*, "You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard."

Having enlarged upon the banquets of the great, I have now no space to devote to the daily fare of the poor, whereby hangs a moral; but as the Duchess says in *Alice in Wonderland*, "Tut tut tut! Everything's got a moral if only you can find it." We know, however, that science had begun to be applied to food; cattle were successfully fattened as never before; breeds were improved; grafting experiments were made with plants. We all know of Bacon's fateful experiment with cold-storage. It was the day of enthusiasm over novelties, of aping of foreign customs, as we see in the French "sauces," of magnificence among the rich, and increasing plenty among the commons.

An element of romance crept into the reading of these old cookery books. The gay company that rejoiced and feasted,—the fighters, pirates, statesmen, poets, ladies—that seemed to pass through the records of these old books, the once-busy kitchens and long-silent banquet halls, were all reanimated before the mind's eye.

They were indeed an intrepid race—"those English"—who sailed the stormy seas, and survived the no less deadly banquets. In truth might the gourmet rising from the feast exclaim,—

"Fate cannot harm me;
I have dinned to-day."

KATHERINE MORSE.

New York City.